

Frederick County Veterans Advisory Council Minutes

Wednesday, August 21, 2019

Attendance

Voting Members	Present	Absent	Excused
Daniel Campbell	X		
Sharon Jacko	X		
David Kaye	X		
Rachel Nachlas	X		
Fred Schumacher	X		
John Lynn Shanton		X	
Fred Wood	X		
Ex-officio members			
Dee Harrison			X
Michelle Day			X
Andrea Walker			X
Michael McLane			X
County Councilman Steve McKay			X
Delegate Carol Krimm		X	
Robin Summerfield		X	

Guests: Teresa Spruill, Ashley Roush, Brad Nielson, Miles Ward, Keri Keefer, James Hubbard, Eileen Mitchell, Karen Duffy, Sydney Dexter, Nan Mann, Joyce Anne Sundergill-Schmid (for Andrea Walker).

Staff: Linda Bergofsky

Welcome and Introductions

Fred Schumacher opened the meeting by leading the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair's Comments: Fred Schumacher noted that we have a very full agenda and welcomed Joyce Anne Sundergill-Schmid, who is sitting in for Andrea Walker.

Establishment of a quorum: After a review of attendance, Fred Schumacher determined that a quorum was established.

Approval of Meeting Agenda: A motion was made by Fred Wood to approve the meeting agenda. Dan Campbell seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Old Business

Approval of the July 17, 2019 meeting minutes: David Kaye made a motion to approve the minutes of July 17, 2019 as submitted. Sharon Jacko seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously.

Bridge dedication honoring PFC. Brandenburg: Fred Wood reported on the impressive attendance at a very poignant and moving ceremony to dedicate the bridge on Rt. 80 over the Monocacy River in honor of PFC. Brandenburg. PFC. Brandenburg, a lifelong Frederick County resident, made the ultimate sacrifice while serving in Vietnam. The ceremony was held on August 9 at the American Legion Post 11. Several members of the VAC were present as was the County Executive, other dignitaries, and many friends and extended family of PFC. Brandenburg.

Draft Bylaws: David Kaye introduced the second draft of the bylaws, which reflect several changes recommended by Steve McKay. The Council members discussed one additional substantive change, specifically Section 5. Resignations, part b., regarding attendance at meetings. The requested changes, which comport with members' original appointment letters, would alter that section as follows:

b. Any voting member of the VAC who ~~fails to attend at least 50% of the meetings during any period of 12 consecutive months shall be considered to have resigned~~ has more than three (3) unexcused absences from meetings in any period of 12 consecutive months shall be considered to have resigned.

There was additional discussion about the terms of appointment; the language currently in the bylaws follows the language in the enabling legislation and is consistent with other advisory bodies in the County. Fred Schumacher asked that staff make the requested changes and redistribute to the VAC so that the VAC can vote on the bylaws at the September meeting under Old Business.

Presentation

The Veterans Show at the Delaplaine Arts Center: Sydney Dexter, Manager of Exhibitions, presented an overview of the Delaplaine Arts Center, an inclusive gallery and studio venue in Frederick with a mission of making art accessible to everyone. From November 2 through December 1, 2019, Delaplaine will be hosting its first ever Veterans Show. There is no theme for the show and any Veteran may submit a piece in any medium. Prior to the opening reception, Delaplaine will host a panel of distinguished experts to discuss the therapeutic value of creating and experiencing art. There will also be a special show by Michael Douglas Jones and studio opportunities for active military at Ft. Detrick. The Council expressed support for this effort, and asked if Delaplaine has considered dedicating studio space for Veterans and Active Duty. Sydney concurred that this approach can be valuable, having seen the success of the Healing Arts Center at Martinsburg.

Supporting Veterans at Frederick Community College: VAC member Rachel Nachlas, who heads the Veterans and Military Services office at Frederick Community College (FCC), described the evolution of the office since its inception in 2012. Recently renamed to explicitly include students on active duty and in the National Guard as well as Veterans, VMS offers a comprehensive approach to supporting students from certifying VA benefits, to academic

advising, financial counseling, providing opportunities for socialization and engagement, and through post-graduation transition support. Rachel has found that the vast array of benefits and financing options can be overwhelming for students; VMS helps them optimize their educational benefits by navigating the eligibility rules. She noted that this approach has yielded positive results. In 2011 and 2012, between 7 and 10 Veterans graduated. However, in the most recent year, there were 80 Veteran graduates.

Rachel also provided an overview of the various programs, certificate, non-credit, continuing education, and credit courses available at FCC and how the College supports Veterans, military, and their families with priority registration and in county tuition, regardless of where the student lives. She reviewed the website and how to find additional information on FCC and the VMS. The Council inquired as to what funds were available to support older Veterans who are not eligible for any VA educational benefits, but need to gain skills to remain competitive in the job market. Rachel noted that Frederick County makes no funds available for this purpose; a VA program that provided some support was found to be administratively unworkable and was not renewed. The VAC also inquired as to the estimated costs for attending FCC. Rachel estimated that it costs approximately \$2,000 per semester to attend FCC full time. Members of the VAC discussed the possibility of pursuing dedicated funding for Veterans without access to VA educational benefits.

Public Comment

Teresa Spruill, Maryland Department of Labor, noted that the Workforce Development Program offers funding support for Veterans to obtain education and skill training.

Eileen Mitchell, grant coordinator for the 2020 Census Complete County Committee, described current efforts underway to ensure that all Frederick County residents are counted in the 2020 Census. She noted that Veterans are among the most commonly undercounted cohorts and that every completed Census form increases the funding flowing back to the county. The Census will be distributed next March; the Census Bureau is currently recruiting for staff to do address verification, outreach, and enumeration.

Sub-committee Reports

Tri-fold: Linda Bergofsky prepared a draft VAC tri-fold that was distributed to the members. She noted that the logo was designed by Donald Street, USAF (ret.). The response was generally favorable. The VAC asked if pictures of Frederick County War Memorials could be used instead of the National Memorials in Washington.

Speakers: Linda Bergofsky confirmed speakers for September through November as follows:

- September: Jim Hubbard, Frederick County Veterans History Project, and Josh Bokee, Comcast
- October: Diana Modelski, Community Veterans Engagement Board and Julie Riggs, Frederick Veterans Service Network
- November: Col. Laureen Barone, VA Veterans Experience Office

Linda has approached the Public Affairs Office at Ft. Detrick to identify a speaker for December (it will likely not be the Commandant). She requested that the members of the Speakers Subcommittee meet to plan for at least the first six months of 2020 as speakers need sufficient advance notice to get meetings on the calendar. She mentioned with the Point in Time count planned for January, the topic for that meeting may be around Veteran homelessness and housing issues.

Bylaws: There was no additional discussion.

New Business

Proposal to hold closed session on September 9: The legislation establishing the VAC held that three of the seven voting seats would be appointed for an initial one year term; the remaining seats are for a two-year term. Those one year terms are due to expire on October 1, 2019. The County published a notice in the Frederick Post on August 11 and August 18, inviting anyone who meets the criteria to submit a letter of interest and current resume. In addition, the three incumbents were provided the opportunity to do the same. Documentation must be submitted by August 30 to Ms. Joyce Grossnickle in the County executive's office. Once received, the voting members will review the letters of interest and resumes and make recommendations to the County Executive as to which individuals should be put forward to fill those three seats for a full 2 year term. Ms. Grossnickle will prepare a staff report detailing those recommendations for Ms. Gardner, who will then pass her recommendations on to the County Council for a vote on September 24. This timing will result in the least amount of disruption. In order to meet these timelines, the VAC plans on holding a special closed meeting on September 9, 2019 to review the applicants for the three voting seats due to expire on October 1, 2019. During this special meeting, the VAC plans on discussing the following two topics only:

1. Qualifications of applicants for three voting member slots on the Frederick County Veterans Advisory Council for a two year term beginning October 2, 2019; and
2. Recommendations for filling the three members slots to be submitted to the County Executive.

Sharon Jacko made a motion to have a closed meeting on September 9, which is statutorily allowed under the Maryland Open Meetings Act General Provisions Article § 3-305(b): (1) "To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals". Rachel Nachlas seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Linda Bergofsky noted that the meeting would be held at 6 PM at Frederick County Citizen Services Division, 401 Sagner Avenue, Frederick.

Coordinator's Report: Linda Bergofsky gave the Coordinator's Report. In addition to revising the bylaws and preparing the draft tri-fold, she is continuing efforts to engage Veteran serving organizations around issues of importance to the VAC. To that end, she attended the World War II enactment at Rose Hill Manor Park, where she met many local Veterans included PFC. Charles Bare who served between 1944 and 1947. Additionally, Linda participated in the Mental Health Summit sponsored by the Martinsburg VAMC.

She encouraged the VAC and those in attendance to visit the VAC website for upcoming events, including a job fair at Martinsburg on September 13. Flyers for The Veterans Art Show, the job fair, and Operation Tohidu retreats were available as handouts. She reminded everyone that the next meeting will be held on Wednesday September 18 at 6:30 PM.

Announcements

Joyce Anne Sundergill-Schmid mentioned that Frederick County will commemorate National Recovery Month with the Frederick County Goes Purple campaign to support all those who live with addiction or are in recovery. The kickoff event will take place Sept. 7 with a National Recovery Month proclamation by the County Executive and Health Officer Dr. Barbara Brookmyer at Carroll Creek Linear Park. Additional events will occur throughout September, including Sept. 5: Recovery's Got Talent show in Baker Park; Sept. 10: Viewing of Conrad Weaver's documentary "Heroin's Grip" at Frederick High School; Sept. 14: Hot rod car show at Nymeo Field at Harry Grove Stadium; and Sept. 28: Music is Medicine's third annual Hope for Change Fest.

Sharon Jacko announced the upcoming United Way of Frederick County Day of Action on October 4, 2019. VAC members and guests who know of any Veteran who needs a home repair project should forward the information to Sharon, who will bring it to United Way.

Dan Campbell thanked everyone who sent notes of encouragement and support during his recent illnesses.

Adjournment

Upon completion of business the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Next Meetings:

Regular monthly meeting: September 18 at 6:30 pm.

The meeting will be held in Winchester Hall, 3rd Floor Conference Room

Submitted by Linda Bergofsky